



MONTAGUE PASTORAL CHARGE

ANNUAL REPORTS

2023



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Vital Statistics - 2023

Baptisms

Ruby Irene Doyle (daughter of Andrew Doyle & Ellen Panting)
Anna Maureen Doyle (daughter of Andrew Doyle & Ellen Panting)
Lincoln Thomas Nabuurs (son of Adam Nabuurs & Jessica Annear)

Marriages

Owen Collier and Hannah Sibbick (August 12, 2023)
Steven Hicken and Jennifer Johnston (November 4, 2023)

Deaths

Dorothy Faye Clements (Jan. 9, 2023)
William Reginald MacLaren (Feb. 15, 2023)
Joshua John Anthony Pater (Feb. 11, 2023)
Rose Mary Walker (Feb. 28, 2023)
Donald Glenn Nicholson (May 1, 2023)
Benjamin Arthur Weatherbie (May 7, 2023)
William Edward Millar (Jan. 13, 2023)
Ada Ruth Riley (July 1, 2023)
Steven George Clarkson (Feb. 17, 2023)
William Kenneth Campbell (July 24, 2023)
Gary Russel Clow (Aug. 3, 2023)
Darren Ernest Ross (Oct. 6, 2023)
Elizabeth Margaret Nimmo (Oct. 21, 2023)
Blair Austin Ross (Oct. 26, 2023)

Minister's Report

2023 was a very fulfilling year for me, vocationally speaking. Not only have I learned a huge amount about ministry, with the help of the Community of Faith Connection, but my own faith has deepened as a result of regular worship, preaching, pastoral care, and congregational life with such inspired folks as we have at Sturgeon and Hillcrest. MPC is an ideal setting for a student ministry placement; when my time with you is over, I would encourage you to consider continuing to serve the wider Church by welcoming student ministry candidates.

I led some special weekday worship services in addition to our regular Sunday morning services: Lenten prayer services in the Hillcrest chapel and Celtic midday prayer services through the summer at the Montague waterfront. The latter, which featured special Celtic music, brought in donations for the Southern Kings and Queens Food Bank, and brought in a few visitors who happened to be nearby enjoying the river. Other special worship services included Ash Wednesday at Hillcrest, Maundy Thursday at Sturgeon, an ecumenical Easter sunrise service at Hillcrest, youth-led worship at Hillcrest in the spring, a joint pastoral charge "Animal Celebration" service outdoors with the blessing of pets, and joyful anniversary services at both churches.

Christian Education and Faith Formation for all ages continues to be a special interest of mine, and I feel blessed with such a fine team of Sunday School teachers to rely on. For adults, we held two seasonal Bible studies in 2023: a Lenten study on the Gospel of Mark and an autumn study on the Book of Psalms. Attendees seemed to enjoy the opportunity to sink into these two fascinating books of scripture. In the fall, I took a study week in order to prepare a confirmation program for Hillcrest, which I hope to run later this year with some of our youth.

Sadly, I presided at a number of funerals and memorials for members and adherents of Hillcrest or Sturgeon in 2023. I have tried to lead these services in a way that gives glory to God for the precious and unique individuals that these loved ones were, knowing that their impact on our church family will never pass away.

I provide pastoral care, with the help of the MPC Congregational Care Committee, to a number of our members, mainly through hospital visits, home visits, and phone calls. It was a particular honour to celebrate Communion with some of our faithful members near the end of life. More often, however, pastoral care takes the form of simple compassion, listening, and connection – gifts which all of us, laypeople or ministers, can (and do) give.

Over several months, I assisted the MPC executive to study the UCC remit on creating an autonomous Indigenous Church structure within the UCC. After some thoughtful discussion and consideration of the history and promises made so far, the remit was passed at our fall meeting. If the remit is carried across Canada, this should mean a huge change in the direction of dignity and self-direction for our siblings in Indigenous UCC communities.

While we have lost a number of members of our church families, Hillcrest has also welcomed some newcomers in recent months – a promising sign that our church can grow and flourish as the communities around us change and grow.

Finally, I want you to know that I was deeply touched at my covenanting service, which took place on Palm Sunday, and that I still take very seriously the promises I made to you all at that time. Thank you for your commitment to grow and journey with me as I learn how to be a minister of God's amazing grace!

May God bless you and grant you life abundant in 2024.

Timothy Wisnicki,
Student Minister

Community of Faith Connection Report 2023

The Community of Faith Connection (CFC) is a representative group of lay people from the Montague Pastoral Charge who were appointed by the Executive Council to provide support and guidance to our ministerial candidate. The CFC, composed of Corrine Ellsworth, Melissa Mullen, Hugh MacDonald and Sherren MacKinnon, met a total of ten times with our ministerial candidate, Timothy Wisnicki, to offer ongoing feedback and reflect with him on his experiences with us. A Learning Covenant, outlining our goals, was developed and submitted to the Candidacy Board. In September the CFC Team, along with Timothy, held a Zoom meeting with Caroline Lucas, the United Church of Canada's representative for the Candidacy Board, for training on the modified requirements for the CFC. Following this, our team met to write a mid-term report on Timothy's progress. That report was submitted to the Candidacy Board on November 13th, 2023. We continue to seek feedback from congregants as we try to provide the best support and feedback to Timothy as we are able. The CFC members are finding this to be a rewarding experience and all were grateful to have been able to work with such an accomplished candidate as Timothy. We look forward to the upcoming year with Timothy as he works towards his ordination.

Respectfully submitted, Sherren MacKinnon

Chair of Montague Pastoral Charge Executive - Annual Report 2023

After the MPC Governance Organizational Structure was amended and approved at the 2022 AGM, the revamped MPC executive met in March. The 13 members represent committees and responsibilities that are shared by both Hillcrest and Sturgeon congregations. Rev. Kevin Dingwell has continued to act as our Regional Supervisor.

A New Covenant Fellowship service was held for Timothy Wisnicki on Apr. 2nd. It was a symbolic and joyful service involving representatives from the FSLDW Regional Council as well as members of both congregations. Rev. Martin Dawson was the guest speaker. After approval at the 2022 annual meeting of the General Council, all regional councils and pastoral charges have been asked to approve an amendment to the Basic of Union of the Manual which would allow the establishment of an autonomous Indigenous Church organization within the United Church of Canada. Timothy provided a study guide and video resources to give the committee as much information as possible on the topic. After discussion at 2 meetings, the remit was voted on and approved.

The CEBA loan received from the federal government during the COVID years has been repaid. Thanks to excellent management by the S & T committee, additional interest was earned over the loan period.

I'd like to commend all members of the committee for their dedication and contributions to the Montague Pastoral Charge. The reports provided at each meeting keep us abreast of the work and initiatives taken and I feel the lines of communication between the 2 congregations are open and working well.

Respectfully submitted by Helen Lockerby

MPC – Ministry and Personnel

The Ministry and Personnel Committee of the Montague Pastoral Charge is comprised of five members from both Hillcrest and Sturgeon United Churches. This group acts as a liaison between the church and its employees, reporting as needed to the Montague Pastoral Charge Executive Committee. Each committee member volunteers for a three-year term.

All discussions are confidential. Concerns must be submitted to the committee in writing for the required action to be taken.

The Ministry and Personnel Committee has the following responsibilities:

- a. being available for consultation and support for matters involving pastoral charge staff;
- b. overseeing the relationship of the pastoral charge staff to each other and to people in the congregation;
- c. regularly reviewing the working conditions, responsibilities, and compensation of all pastoral charge staff;
- d. making any recommendations needed as a result of these reviews to the governing body;
- e. revising position descriptions of pastoral charge staff as needed;
- f. conducting annual performance reviews of the pastoral charge staff;
- g. ensuring pastoral charge staff make use of opportunities for continuing education that they have been given, and;
- h. maintaining close contact with the regional council Pastoral Relations Committee or equivalent.

Committee Members: Carol Blum, Beryl Palmer, Shirley Johnson, Lyman Douglas, and Deborah Lavers (Chairperson)

Manse Committee Annual Report 2023

We have been very pleased to have Timothy and Elizabeth Wisnicki in the manse this year.

We had been planning to have the manse roof replaced with a new steel roof for some time. In early August that project was completed so that should serve us well for many years.

We had planned on painting the outside of the manse this summer and had arranged to have a contractor to do that. Unfortunately, there was a lot of rain during the summer, so it was not good weather for painting outside. Finally in September there was a short period of favourable weather, and our contractor was available. He was able to complete the painting of the east end and the south side only. He will complete the remaining ½ of the building next summer.

In addition to annual maintenance, there were several repairs carried out during the year; non-skid material was installed on the wheelchair ramp and there were three plumbing repairs. Thank you to John Matheson for helping with the plumbing.

We have arranged to install two heat pumps in the manse. The contractor plans to carry out this work in January or February 2024.

Respectively submitted by David White

Montague Pastoral Charge Income and Expenses and Annual Budget

Description	2023 Actual	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
PASTORAL CHARGE			
INCOME			
Hillcrest Contributions	107,220	126,873	131,740
Sturgeon Contributions	8,194	8,098	8,409
Income Totals:	115,414	134,971	140,149
PASTORAL CHARGE			
PASTORAL SALARIES			
Ministers Salary	39,858	39,858	42,369
Minister Benefits	5,475	13,470	5,819
Minister CPP	1,494	2,000	1,683
Minister EI	862	1,200	916
Ministers Travel	1,705	1,000	1,900
Ministers Education	265	1,543	1,640
Ministers Phone	1,200	1,200	1,200
Ministers Moving Expense	-3,922	0	0
Pulpit Supply	1,392	2,400	5,000
SUPPORT STAFF			
STAFF SALARIES			
Administration Salary	13,075	13,075	13,900
Bookkeeper	12,308	11,665	13,083
BENEFITS			
Staff Insurance	1,654	1,300	1,700
Staff Pension	1,186	1,000	1,200
EMPLOYER EXPENSES			
CPP Expense	2,733	1,800	2,905
EI Expense	1,821	1,200	1,936
Workers Comp Insurance	0	400	300
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE			
Bank Charges	269	120	250
Office Supplies	2,068	1,800	2,000
Office Equipment	866	1,000	500
Postage	53	100	100
Publications & Printing	631	100	100
Church Phones	1,607	1,600	1,600
Website-Social Media	170	190	328
Internet & Copyright Fees	377	0	377
Computer Software	334	0	215
Technology-Training	0	1,500	300
Equipment Maint. & Repair	0	200	200
MANSE EXPENSES			
Electricity	1,272	1,500	1,500
Water & Sewer	816	600	900
Heating Fuel	3,137	4,000	4,000
Taxes	1,850	2,500	2,000

Insurance	555	1,000	600
Repairs/Maintenance	3,182	7,500	5,000
Manse Roof Repairs	9,655	10,000	0
Manse Heat pump	0	0	11,104
New Windows-Manse	0	0	5,474
Worship Supplies	0	400	0
OTHER EXPENSES			
Out Reach Expenses	300	0	300
Misc. Expense-ADP	405	450	450
Misc-Congregational Care	361	500	500
Dues-General Council	6,400	6,400	6,400
C.E. EXPENSES			
CE Program Supplies	0	400	400
Expense Totals:	115,414	134,971	140,149

M.P.C. Mission and Service Report

The Montague Pastoral Charge continues to generously support the Mission and Service Fund of the United Church of Canada. Our contributions help support ministries and programs in Canada and around the world. The "Minute for Mission" portion of our regular Sunday service tells us where our money is needed and how we can help to make a difference. In total, Hillcrest submitted \$18,074.05 for 2023. Hillcrest designates \$3000 for this fund in the annual budget. Hillcrest congregants provided the remaining \$15,074.05. Remittance is done quarterly, and all monies donated by individuals during that quarter are remitted at the same time. Hillcrest's UCW submitted an additional \$1000 directly to the Mission and Service Fund. The Sturgeon congregation sent their donation of \$861 directly as well. Thanks to the readers of the Minute for Mission and to the coordinator for providing information on where our dollars are going and how we are helping to change lives.

Respectfully submitted by Clara VanderAa

MPC Congregational Care Committee – 2023 Report

Our Congregational Care group met 11 times this year to discuss those in our Pastoral Charge who might need Cards of Sympathy or a visit. Teams visited long-term care homes and hospitals. Visits were also made to homes of individuals and cards of concern were added to the church bulletins at times. Those who were marking significant birthdays were recognized with floral arrangements and a card. Our dedicated team has been privileged to serve our church community and we will continue to do our best in the future. A heartfelt thanks goes out to all the dedicated team members.

Respectfully submitted by Carol Blum

MPC – Regional Representatives

The following are highlights from the FSLDW Annual Meeting. Full minutes are available upon request.

Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council Annual Meeting

May 26 – 28, 2023 at UPEI, Charlottetown, PE

“Looking Forward with Hope”

President: James Kennedy

Past President: Sheila Gallant

President James Kennedy was on medical leave and the Past President chaired the meeting.

Opening worship by Rev. Murray Pruden, theme speaker and General Council Representative.

Throughout the Annual Meeting, Ministry of Music was offered by Zach Ingles and Kinley LaFrance. Beautiful and very up lifting. They also hosted a kitchen party that was relaxing and entertaining and enjoyed by all that attended.

Acting President Sheila Gallant led the in-memoriam video presentation. Regional Council members paused to remember those that we have lost since we last gathered and celebrate all that they have given to us. Executive Minister, Faith March-MacCuish, offered prayer. (Included Reverend Bonnie Ann Fraser - see below)

United Church Bookstore – was very nice to have at the Annual meeting. The Bookstore is now available for on-line orders. Very much enjoyed it and got some gifts.

Theme presenter Rev. Murray Pruden, Executive Minister for Indigenous Ministries and Justice for the UCC was welcomed to the Council.

Proposals:

Proposal 1 was presented at the May 10 webinar. A formal apology to all people who have been hurt by the practices and policies that encourage and reinforce the right to discriminate based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Motion was forwarded to General Council for action. Carried.

Andrew Richardson welcomed students and candidates for ministry to the Council: Brian Botten, Catherine Ann Dickson, Christopher Walker, Rhonda Schofield, and Ellen Locke. Designated Lay Ministry student Beverley Sharpe and for Diaconal Ministry Alicia Wells.

UCW - Elaine Burrows, Past President of the Maritime UCW presented a report of the UCW and some of the challenges faced since the pandemic. Highlighted were the 60th Anniversary celebrations and Mission and Service donations.

Remit – a remit is a proposed change to the Basis of Union. An amendment to the Basis of Union in the manual of the UCC to establish an autonomous National Indigenous organization. This is a Category 3 remit, requiring a majority vote by all the Regional Councils and all Communities of Faith that are pastoral charges.

Remit 1 – Amendment to the Basis of Union to establish an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within the UCC.

Does the Regional Council agree to amend the Basis of Union to reflect the change as follows:

1. A three-council structure, consisting of communities of Faith, Regional Councils and a Denominational Council
2. An autonomous National Indigenous Organization – once the new autonomous National Indigenous Organization is established within the UCC it will have its own mechanisms to make any future changes to its structure and processes and therefore will not be subject to the remit process under the Basis of Union
3. The changes required for the establishment of the Autonomous National Indigenous Organizations.

Results: Yes – 105 No – 5

Welcome and best wishes to new ministers: Franklyn James, James Harbell, Euwkyll Ji, John Moses, Tori Mullen and Timothy Wisnicki to the region, with thanks for their ministry among us.

Indigenous guest, Julie Pellissier-Lush. Julie shared stories of the Mi'Kmaq on PEI through her books, songs, and poetry. Julie welcomed the council to this land and shared a song and a poem of hope with thanks to the creator.

Proposal #2 – How We Meet:

Schedule as follows:

2024 meeting in person (PEI pending availability)

2025 meeting online for business (one day); plus in-person 100th Anniversary Celebrations with Regional Council 15 (Tantramar Veterans)

2026 meeting online (Memorial Civic Centre)

2027 meeting in-person (UNB Fredericton, pending availability)

2028 meeting in-person with Regional Council 15 (Tantramar Veterans Memorial Civic)

The years meeting online, the council will support the Youth Region so they can meeting in-person if they choose to.

President-Elect

Motion: Susan LeMaistre be acclaimed as President-Elect of FSLDW Regional Council. Carried.

2024 Budget – with full programming finally resuming after operating through the pandemic years and with increases in expenses, cost of living, increases in staff salaries and the cost of in-person annual meeting, a deficit budgeted was presented. Note the region still holds surpluses from previous years to cover the deficit amount. Carried.

Workshops were very informative with great talks around the table. A total of 13 workshops were offered to members in two sessions on Saturday afternoon. Sunday School and Youth Group resources (Catherine Stuart, CYYA Minister). Very fun person and an inspiration of hope. Ukulele Church (Catherine Stuart, CYYA); Then Let Us Sing (Kevin Parkis) “If you do not know where you are going you are never going to get there”: Pandemic Lessons (Kendall Harrison). Just a few workshops offered.

Sunday May 28, 2023 10 a.m.

The celebration of ministries service was held at UPEI. It was livestreamed for those who were unable to attend in person, an important milestone event.

Acting President Sheila Gallant presided over the service. Rev. D. Elizabeth Stevenson was the preacher. Rev. James Kennedy was present to install the next President of the FSLDW Regional Council – Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Stevenson.

Respectfully Submitted, Shirley Johnston

The United Church of Canada – Presented at FSLDW Regional Meeting



The Reverend Bonnie Ann Fraser

Bonnie died peacefully at the Aberdeen Hospital, New Glasgow, on September 25, 2022. Born November 29, 1952, to the late James and Hazel (Stone) Fraser of Somers Road, Antigonish, Bonnie grew up farming and it remained one of her passions in life. A graduate of Acadia University (1973) with a BA and B.Ed, she started working as a teacher in Alberton, PE and would return to Somers Road to farm during summer vacations.

Teaching was also something Bonnie loved very much.

Bonnie eventually moved back to her home province of Nova Scotia to study and graduated with a Masters in Deaf Education in 1980 from the School for the Deaf in Amherst. Her career as a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing was a role she took on earnestly. Bonnie worked for the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) and valued making meaningful impacts on the lives of her students and their families. Upon moving back to Antigonish, Bonnie started her own family, building a home on Somers Road on the farm where she grew up. In 2007, Bonnie retired from teaching and moved to New Glasgow. Not one to sit still in retirement, Bonnie answered her call to ministry and enrolled in the Atlantic School of Theology. Bonnie completed her ordination into the United Church to Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care in June 2011. In July of that same year, she started ministry with the Hopewell, Eureka, East River Pastoral Charge (St. Columba and Bridgeville United Churches). In due course, a new challenge arose. In January 2019, Bonnie answered the call to the Montague Pastoral Charge, Prince Edward Island, and ministered to the people of Hillcrest and Sturgeon United Churches. Bonnie retired from ministry in September of 2021 when she moved to Summerside, P.E.I. During her retirement, when COVID-19 relented, normal was taking on its new shape. Bonnie cherished time with grandchildren, family, and friends, bringing a move back to Nova Scotia to the horizon. In June of 2022, a sudden onset of illness from cancer made this move happen more suddenly. Bonnie returned to New Glasgow to be close to her family who she loved with all her enormous heart. She was thankful

for her long-time friend, Karen, who opened up her home to help support her journey. This act of kindness, love, and friendship allowed Karen, Laurel, and Jeffrey to be with Bonnie until the end. Bonnie found great strength in all the messages, calls, and visits from friends and family which helped her through many trying times. Bonnie lived a fascinating life, full of love, humour, and hope. She cared immensely for humanity and had faith tomorrow could be better than today. If she thought she could help you on your journey, she would. Bonnie's faith was quietly infectious and the world is left better for it. She knew she didn't walk alone. Bonnie is survived by her daughter, Laurel (Brad) O'Leary, and grandsons, Sam and Mason, New Glasgow; son, Jeffrey (Leah) MacNeil; and grandchildren; Mylee, Quentin, and Aedan, New Germany. Bonnie is also survived by brothers, Bill (Janet) Fraser, Colin (Mary) Fraser, Alberta; Paul (Sandra) Fraser, Prince Edward Island; sister-in-law, Donna Langille; brother-in-law, Wilf Monk, Ontario; sisters-in-law: Jean MacNeil, Anne Walker, Patricia MacNeil and Hilda Hinks; brothers-in-law, Gerard (Marie) MacNeil, Douglas (Barbara) MacNeil and David (Susan) MacNeil; and countless extended family members. In addition to her parents, Bonnie

was predeceased by her sister, Sharon Fraser; brother, Jim Fraser; father of her children, Greg MacNeil; brothers-in-law, Bernie MacNeil, Al Walker, and Jimmy Hinks.

The funeral service was held at Saint James United Church, Antigonish, NS, October 6, 2022.

Report of Montague Pastoral Charge Worship Committee 2023

The worship committee of Montague Pastoral Charge reported to the MPC Executive in January, March, May, September and November of 2023. The committee consists of Debra Lavers representing Sturgeon United and Anne White, Lorna Sukey and Mary Martin representing Hillcrest along with staff persons Timothy Wisnicki and Nancy VanWiechen. At each meeting, we look back at previous services and plan for upcoming Sunday services as well as for special services. At our first meeting in January 2023 we looked back at our Pastoral charge Christmas Eve service with its beautiful music and special treat of musical selections by Elizabeth Wisnicki on Celtic harp. In all of our services leading up to Christmas we had been blessed by the ministry of Timothy Wisnicki who has shown such thought, reverence and creativity in all of these services. We reported to the executive again on March 28th. We gave thanks to Timothy for offering Lenten Bible studies on Monday afternoons at Hillcrest as well as Lenten prayer services in the chapel at noon each Wednesday during Lent. A very meaningful Ash Wednesday service was held at Hillcrest on Feb 22nd with twenty one people being present. Communion was celebrated on February 26th, the first Sunday of Lent at both Hillcrest and Sturgeon. The committee met on March 21st to make plans for Easter events. A Maundy Thursday foot washing ceremony was observed at Sturgeon United. On Good Friday a pastoral charge service was held at Hillcrest. An Easter Sunrise service was held at Hillcrest at 7am followed by a breakfast prepared by the men of the congregation. There was also a 9 am service at Sturgeon and an 11 am service at Hillcrest on Easter.

On April 2nd Timothy's ministry with MPC was formalized and celebrated through a covenanting service organized by the pastoral Charge Search Committee assisted by Rev. Kevin Dingwell. The sermon was given by Rev. Martin Dawson and regional council representative Sheila Gallant was also in attendance and took part in the celebration. Members of both congregations brought forth symbols representing various aspects of Timothy's ministry with us. A social time with food provided by Hillcrest UCW And Sturgeon Ladies Aid was enjoyed by a large crowd of people who had come to celebrate the happy occasion. Communion was celebrated at both Hillcrest and Sturgeon on April 23rd.

During many of the Sunday services at Hillcrest throughout 2023 copies of More Voices were dedicated in the memory of deceased members of the congregation.

Timothy was on holiday from May 8th until May 23rd during which time Garth Steeves conducted the Sunday services at both Hillcrest and Sturgeon. We are blessed by the wonderful preaching and music which characterize our services on MPC.

June services included a presentation by Corinne Ellsworth and

Melva O'Connor-Rafuse reporting on their mission to Guatemala, Youth Sunday featured members of Hillcrest Sunday School playing a leading role, and Graduate Recognition Sunday was on June 25th .

From July 1st to the Sunday after Labor Day worship began as usual at 9 am at Sturgeon and at 10:30 am at Hillcrest.

A Friends and Family concert was held in the Hillcrest sanctuary on July 9th and during July and August ecumenical Celtic services were held at the waterfront at 12:15 led by Timothy on the accordion and sometimes Elizabeth on Celtic harp. July 30th saw the baptism of three young children during the morning service at Hillcrest. On August 6th, a joint pastoral charge service was held outdoors at Hillcrest celebrating the place of animals in our lives with a blessing by Timothy. On August 13th a service planned by Helen Lockerby and Timothy featured the presence and participation of several members of GWBI (Great Wisdom Buddhist Institute). While Timothy was on study leave and vacation we were pleased and fortunate to have Garth Steeves conduct morning services on Aug 20th and on September 3rd. Our friend and former student minister Rev. Jim Harbell conducted on August 27th. Sunday September 24th Hunter River Musical Friends were in concert at Sturgeon.

October 1st communion was celebrated at both churches and at Hillcrest that Sunday, the youth commented on their Camp Abby experiences. Bible study on The Psalms began on Monday evenings from October 16 until November 27th. Sturgeon's 138th Anniversary was observed on October 15th and Hillcrest's 52nd on October 29th.. Remembrance Day wreaths were laid on Nov 5th by Corinne Ellsworth at Sturgeon and Eric Weatherbie and Margie Tesselaar at Hillcrest.

Throughout Advent, special services included lovely carol singing at Sturgeon, White Gift Service and Choir cantata at Hillcrest and memorable Christmas Eve Day services at both churches.

Worship and work at both churches provide a unity of fellowship and praise with strong emphasis on outreach in our community. May it continue to be so in 2024.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Martin Chair of MPC Worship Committee.

MPC Outreach Committee Report - 2023

The Outreach Committee was formed by the Montague Pastoral Charge at the 2023 AGM with a mandate to coordinate existing outreach initiatives and explore the possibilities of starting new projects to offer assistance to people who are in need of support and resources in the Three Rivers area.

The members of the Outreach Committee, Corrine Ellsworth, Melva O'Connor-Rafuse, Timothy Wisnicki and Helen Lockerby held 6 meetings during the year. The committee has been working with Lindee Gallant, the Kings Co. Coordinator for the PEI Community Navigators, which provides services and support for new immigrants arriving in the area. Timothy and Helen attended a meeting with representatives from other local churches to discuss how our Communities of Faith could offer support. Educating the public about the presence of the new arrivals and the challenges they face is one of Lindee's priorities that the committee is working on.

The MPC continues to support the local food bank with monthly donations and the weekly bulletin bag delivery to is a valuable initiative for staying connected with congregants who are unable to attend Sunday services. The Outreach Committee also provided snacks for a weekly meeting of the youth group held at the Montague Community Church.

There are also 2 major ongoing initiatives: the Hillcrest Community Garden under the capable direction of Roger and Lenore Andrew and the monthly Community Lunch held at Hillcrest and coordinated by Sandra MacDonald. Their reports are included here.

The Monthly Community Lunch committee has served a meal each month for the past 15 months. Every month two volunteers each bring a large pot of soup. Two others bring desserts. The committee gathers about nine thirty and prepares about five types of sandwiches- about 65 or 70 sandwiches. The meal is served from 11:30- 1:00 on the fourth Thursday of each month and is attended by 60 plus people who seem to have an enjoyable time chatting or playing games. A slotted box offers people a chance to contribute if they so wish and contributions are a little more than expenses. The committee wants to thank the many people who support this initiative in any way.

Hillcrest Community Garden 2023

The Hillcrest Community Garden continues to be an outreach program provided by volunteers of Hillcrest United Church. It is a wonderful way for Hillcrest to share some land and so provide people in the community with an opportunity to connect with the earth by growing garden plants.

The soil is limed, manured, and cultivated by volunteers. Water, as needed, is provided by the church. The grass areas adjacent to the garden are kept mowed and trimmed and other maintenance is attended to as required.

Many thanks are extended to Sandy Rae Farms (Dannie and Alexander MacKinnon) for providing and spreading cattle manure, to Edgar Dewar for spring rototilling, to Lynda Annear for keeping the garden area grass mowed and trimmed throughout the season, and to Jackie Peters, a gardener, for painting the shed trim and garden sign.

During the winter of 2023 the Garden Committee developed garden rules and guidelines, along with a gardener agreement. These forms provide gardeners with information and details of expectations and responsibilities about weeding and other aspects of plot management. These documents were explained to and signed by each gardener. This process was of considerable benefit toward having productive and esthetically pleasing gardens.

A battery powered trimmer-edger was donated. Also, funds donated by the UCW were used to purchase some items for the garden. The Garden Fund provided for other garden needs.

A garden cleanup work-party was held in conjunction with Hillcrest's outdoor spring cleanup. Gardeners were invited to a meet and greet information session held in June.

The weather provided much warmth and rainfall throughout the 2023 growing season. There were 25 households assigned to full and half-sized garden plots. One plot was gardened by a newcomer from Ukraine.

A few vacant plots were improved with additional manure and buckwheat. The new section north of the garden shed was manured, limed, and further enriched by planting successive crops of buckwheat. Thanks to Ralph and Harry Annear for allowing access to some well rotted horse manure for this area. Fall 2023 saw some of this space being planted with rhubarb and garlic.

Many gardeners expressed appreciation for having an opportunity to connect with the earth by growing a wide variety of vegetables and flowers in this peaceful setting east of the church,

**Submitted by Lenore and Roger Andrew
Hillcrest Garden Guardians**

Respectfully submitted by Helen Lockerby

Hillcrest Congregation Chair

The Hillcrest congregation was in the capable hands for Timothy Wisnicki for its pastoral needs in 2023. Thanks to Timothy for sharing his time and talents with us. There were no special congregational meetings required in 2023. The members of the congregation would like to thank all the committees and their chairs that work very hard at making Hillcrest congregation operate so successfully.

Respectfully submitted by Dannie MacKinnon, Congregation chairperson

Session Annual Report - 2023

Session at Hillcrest United Church has been undergoing a process of downsizing for the last three years, and this is now complete. For 2024, we will be a group of eighteen members, two less than 2023. Session is in charge of the comings and goings in the sanctuary of the church, and also keeps track of membership, and the general well-being of congregants. We meet five times a year and communicate by e-mail during the rest of the year.

During 2023, Session provided communion for the Congregation of Hillcrest in February, April, October and December. Several Session members helped to prepare the communion meal, to serve it, also to clean up afterwards. This makes sure that everyone knows how the congregation likes it done. Since Covid, we have been seating the Congregation in alternate pews during communion services, and a Session member moves along the empty pew, passing out the bread and juice part of the Sacraments, to maintain sanitation as much as possible.

Session approves baptisms, marriages and use of the sanctuary, usually sending electronic messages whenever possible. This year, Session approved using the sanctuary for Music Festival Concerts, so that young people in the community could perform publicly

to prepare for Music Festival; using the sanctuary for the “Close to the Ground” concert series in July, August and September; and using the sanctuary for extra seating for the MacDonald funeral at the request of the Ferguson Logan Funeral Home. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped out in these Community Outreach situations.

At every meeting, Session members donate to a fund, which is then used to buy grocery cards to help out families who are having temporary difficulty making ends meet. Timothy and Nancy are very happy to have access to these cards to help families who are in stressful situations. Several cards have been distributed this year especially.

Session also supervises the Darren Martin Memorial Fund, which is used to help families who must take a child off the Island for medical help; and the Les Graves Memorial Fund, which is used to purchase Christmas treats for the Sunday School children, for Seniors, and for Sunday School Curriculum. Thanks to Angela Palmer, Mary Martin, Bella and Tanya Sibbick, who organize all of this.

Thanks very much to all the Session Members, who volunteer to help out whenever needed, who provide information and expertise when necessary, and who answer their e-mails quickly when a fast response is required!

Respectfully submitted by co-chairs of Session,

Margie Tesselaar & Elizabeth LeLacheur

Hillcrest Stewards and Trustee Report - 2023

The year 2023 has been a very exciting year for Hillcrest and MPC. We are so grateful for the spiritual leadership of our student minister Timothy Wisnicki; as well as the many volunteers who keep the heart of our church beating so strongly and the buildings and grounds so well maintained.

Repair and maintenance highlights in the church included a new heater in the minister's office, church radiator zone valve replacements, repairs to the sewage lift pump tank, a new office printer, new paper towel dispensers in the washrooms and kitchens, several carpets cleaned, extra insulation added to basement headers, and a new back-up generator to run the furnace in case of power outage.

The manse roof was replaced and the exterior partially painted. Enough paint has been purchased for the remainder, to be completed in the summer of 2024. Two heat pumps have been ordered for the manse, to be installed early in the new year. Many thanks go to David White for overseeing/organizing all of the repair work for both the church and manse. Also, thanks to Andrew Campion, Jeff and John Matheson, John LeLecheur, and Elmer VanderAa and others who help with projects as they arise. We are grateful to all the folks who helped purchase nearly all the items on our S & T wish list.

After a hiatus of several months, the Technology Committee re-formed in September; with a focus on updating policies and procedures for technology use. This group is actively seeking new equipment for internet broadcasting. Thank you to John Meerburg, Thane and Elizabeth LeLacheur and David White for managing the church audio and internet broadcasts for Sunday services.

The community lunch, prompted by the power outages following Fiona, has become a popular monthly event with an average of 50-60 attendees. Thanks to Sandra and all the

many volunteers who make soups, desserts and sandwiches for this ongoing community outreach project.

The Hillcrest Community Garden, under the very capable guardianship of Lenore and Roger Andrew, was a great success this year. The nearly 25 full plots produced a tremendous amount of food and provided great pleasure for the gardeners as well as everyone who simply enjoyed stopping by to 'watch the garden grow'. Thanks also to Edgar Dewar for tilling, Alexander and Dannie MacKinnon for manure and Lynda Annear for mowing around the gardens.

The Hillcrests grounds are kept beautifully thanks to Harry Annear's provision of snow removal and lawn care, Elmer VandrAa's mowing of the field, and Tracey's mowing around the church building. Thanks also to Scott Annear for the additional topsoil.

The 'Fundscrip' gift card purchasing fundraiser has been underway for over a year now; and has raised nearly \$3000 to date. Many thanks to Nancy for overseeing this and for everyone who purchases gift cards.

We are also grateful to our treasurer Clara VanderAa, and bookkeeper Lynne Craddock for their continued good management of Hillcrest's financials.

The Close to the Ground Concert Series was a tremendous fund-raising success. The concerts were held every Thursday from July to the end of September. Rent, concession sales, and the 50/50 draw raised nearly \$10,000. Thank you to Tracey for cheerfully taking on the extra cleaning duties. So many volunteers contributed to the success. Hopefully the series will return to Hillcrest in 2024.

Thank-you to outgoing S & T Chair Beryl Palmer for her skill and generosity in the role. And thank-you to all Hillcrest members and adherents for your continued support of this committee's work.

Respectfully submitted by Melissa Mullen, Chair of Stewards and Trustees.

Christian Education Report 2023

It was a busy year for the Christian Education Committee with a lot of heartfelt and thoughtful outreach! While January was relatively quiet, February saw our Hillcrest Youth create/sign valentines to be distributed in person to the congregation of Hillcrest, in all the Bulletin Bags, as well as distributed to Seniors homes in the area. Throughout March our youth created cards and artwork to present to Timothy during his Covenanting service on April 2nd..

Our Easter season began with Timothy leading a Lenten study, which was held Monday afternoons and had approximately 12 participants. On Easter Sunday, following a thoughtful service, we held another successful Easter egg hunt. The youth loved searching through the church for hidden eggs, and some of our more senior members took part!

On Mother's Day, our youth distributed carnations (donated by the Men's Group) to all the women in attendance. They also gave bouquets of tulips to Anne and Sara to thank them for their dedication to our youth's music program, and each member brought a bouquet of tulips home to their mothers. Following Mother's Day, our youth began work on their 'Seeds of Hope' artwork. After church service on June 11th and 18th, they sold these and donated seeds to raise funds to donate to Mission and Service Ukrainian Relief Fund. On June 18th we celebrated our youth with our Sunday School closing, which they helped plan and orchestrate! After their beautiful sermon, they were each recognized with treats,

and following the service we had cupcakes to share with the congregation during Coffee Time.

This year saw our Sunday School curriculum change from "The Whole People of God" to "Illustrated Ministry", which was selected over the summer months. In September we held a Welcome Back ice cream social following the September 10th service. On October 1st Hillcrest youth members highlighted their experiences at Camp Abby during the service.

Advent was a very busy season for our committee. Our Hillcrest youth had an active role in collecting food bank donations each week, and, as well, families of our youth members participated in the weekly Advent reading/candle lighting. A Mitten Tree was put up at the front of Hillcrest church which was quickly filled with mittens and hats to be donated to local schools and organizations. On December 17th, our youth presented the White Gift Service, led by Bella Sibbick, which included an entertaining retelling of the Nativity story, as well as a collection of gifts for youths wrapped in white which were donated to the Montague Lions Club annual Christmas Toy Drive. The Senior Christmas Care packages initiative was another huge success this year. With donations from our generous congregants, we were able to distribute over 115 gifts to members of our congregations and senior homes in the area, as well as members of Inclusions East.

We thank everyone for all your support in our numerous outreach programs; it is truly amazing the generosity of our community of faith!

Respectfully submitted by Angela Palmer Chair of CE

Hillcrest United Church Treasurer's Report 2023

Hillcrest United Church continued to maintain a healthy financial position during the 2023 fiscal year. Our expenses were lower than our Income by approximately \$18,000. The higher income was partially due to the first year of hosting Fiddlers' Sons "Close to the Ground" concert series. Rental of the sanctuary, sales of fudge and water from the canteen and our share of the 50-50 draw brought in approximately twelve thousand dollars. Hillcrest welcomed large numbers of concert goers every Thursday evening for the months of July, August and September. Fiddlers' Sons were very appreciative of the warmth and courtesy extended by the volunteers who made this project possible. We hope to continue with this project in 2024. Thanks to everyone who donated their time and energy to make this such a success.

As in past years, there is a monthly rotation of teams of two who count and document each Sunday's offerings in the presence of Lynne.

Members of the finance committee of the Stewards and Trustees validate these signed reports as well as approve payments for expenses that are incurred, sign cheques for those expenses and reconcile the general ledger of our bookkeeping system to the Scotiabank statement each month. Examination of the income and expense statement and balance sheet is done at scheduled meetings of the Stewards and Trustees. A thank you is extended to all who make this process run smoothly. In addition, we have been fortunate to have the services of Dawn Wheeler who does an external examination of our records, bank entries, GIC statements and procedures. She will provide this service for the 2023 fiscal year.

The government funded CEBA loan was repaid in December, within the terms of repayment, leaving us with \$20,000 to use at our discretion. Plans are underway to best utilize this amount.

Respectfully submitted by Clara VanderAa

Hillcrest United Church Income and Expenses – Annual Budget Worksheet

	2023	2023	2024
	Actual	Budget	Budget
HILLCREST FUND			
INCOME			
Contributions	92,167	98,655	93,956
Par Contributions	50,962	52,000	52,000
Plate	3,974	3,000	4,000
In Memory Donations	4,528	5,000	5,000
Project Income	31,743	15,500	20,000
Bulletin Memorials	935	1,300	1,000
Rent	390	2,000	500
Special Donations	3,025	0	2,000
Special Donations Payouts	-3,025	0	0
UCW Donations	5,997	6,000	6,000
Miscellaneous Income	749	200	500
Commission on Gift Cards	3,145	0	0
Publications	452	400	400
CEBA Grant	0	20,000	20,000
Instrument & Music Funds	335	0	0
Community Garden	7,267	0	1,000
Investment Interest	4,847	0	0
Income Totals:	207,491	204,055	206,356
HILLCREST FUND			
EXPENSES			
STAFF SALARIES			
Custodian	11,635	11,800	12,368
Music Salaries	14,490	14,490	15,403
BENEFITS			
Staff Insurance	1,745	1,400	1,800
Staff Pension	1,384	1,600	1,400
EMPLOYER EXPENSES			
CPP Expense	489	500	495
EI Expense	565	700	600
Workers Comp Insurance	267	0	0
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE			
Bank Charges	-25	50	50

Par Service Charge	210	300	300
Misc Admin Expenses	211	0	200
Publications & Printing	1,264	700	1,000
Website-Social Media	0	693	0
BUILDING & GROUNDS			
UTILITIES			
Electricity	3,771	4,500	4,500
Water & Sewer	870	900	900
Heating Fuel	4,587	6,000	5,500
Insurance	3,832	4,000	4,000
BUILDING MAINTENANCE			
Supplies Janitorial	1,659	8,000	1,000
Yard Maintenance	8,100	7,500	8,100
Repairs/Maintenance	9,993	5,000	10,000
Building Fund Major	5,949	10,000	0
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION			
Worship Supplies	292	300	300
Confirmation Supplies	0	0	150
Music Supplies	409	500	600
Copyright Licensing			
Occasional Musicians	650	500	650
OTHER EXPENSES			
Community Garden Expenses	419	1,000	800
Camp Abbey Expenses	0	400	400
Misc-Congregational Care	468	500	500
Mission & Service Expense	3,000	3,000	3,000
C.E. EXPENSES			
Sunday School Curriculum	0	450	500
Sunday School Supplies	198	100	100
PASTORAL CHARGE SHARE			
Pastoral Charge Share 94%	112,714	126,872	131,740
Expense Totals:	189,144	211,755	206,356

Hillcrest United Church – Balance Sheet – December 2023

Current Year

ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
	Bank Account	\$44,216.94
	Right Size Savings	21,268.34
	Fundscript Cards	12,900.00
		78,385.28
Current Assets		
INVESTMENTS		
	GIC Scotia Bank	35,066.92
	Fortis Shares	34,101.59
	Darren Martin Fund	3,240.00
	Wigginton Endowment Fund	5,100.00
	Les Graves Santa Fund	2,403.99
	Albert Martin Fund	3,133.00
		83,045.50
Investments		
OTHER ASSETS		
	Accounts Receivable	167.79
	Commission on Gift Cards	3,144.55
	HST Refunds	1,489.09
	PST Refund	2,698.92
		7,500.35
Other Assets		
		\$168,931.13
TOTAL ASSETS		
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
OTHER CURRENT LIABILITIES		
	Mission House Funds	\$888.00
	Wish List Funds	2,983.44
	Albert Martin Fund	2,877.15
	Technology Funds	9,846.81
	Furnace Fund	125.00
	Instrument and Music Fund	10,371.41
	Int. D. Martin/LesGraves	6,468.42
	Out Reach Fund Account	4,252.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES		37,812.23
TOTAL EQUITY		131,118.90
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		\$168,931.13

PROJECT INCOME 2023

Bridge Club	3000
Cookbook	10
Teachers Concert	40
Fidlers Sons	11902
Feast of Music	738
Clarinet Recital	40
Music Festival	80
KC Music Festival	500
Plant/Yard Sale	5545
Lobster Dinner	4102
Family & Friends	612
Celtic Service	313
Turkey Dinner	3992
JoyfulSounds	870
	31744

Special Donations		Paid Out
Wishlist	387.98	209.86
Chairs	923.85	803.85
Generator	3625	1117.54
Paper towel	322	244.14
Outside lights	100	
Printer	650	650
Transfer to 2024	-2983.44	
	3025.39	3025.39

Hillcrest Funds Explanation

05 - INSTRUMENT AND MUSIC FUND This fund was established to have monies ready for minor or major repairs to our organ or piano and as a resource to purchase music and materials over and above the annual budget. Appreciation is extended to those who contribute to this fund for special music purchases.

06 – ALBERT MARTIN FUND - In March, 2019 after the sudden passing of Albert Martin and through the generosity of his family and friends, a fund was established in Albert's memory to purchase and support an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) for Hillcrest United Church. The residual in the fund is for upkeep of the defibrillator and training for those who might use it. This fund is administered by the Hillcrest Board of Stewards and Trustees. Should Hillcrest United Church cease to exist, the monies from the fund shall be forwarded to Valleyfield Cemetery.

09 - DARREN MARTIN MEMORIAL FUND

This fund is in loving memory of Darren Terrance Martin, son of Howard and Lorraine Martin of Commercial Cross, tragically killed in a car accident on Sunday, October 27, 1991. It was originally set up with a donation of \$1,000 from Harvey & Tina MacKenzie of Valleyfield. Others are invited to make donations to the principal of this fund.

1. The fund is created to provide interest from which financial assistance may be given to children within the Hillcrest Congregation who are in a health care or similar crisis. (The support is primarily for off-island medical care).
2. The fund is to be administered by the Session of Hillcrest United Church or its successor.
3. In the event that Hillcrest United Church ceases as a congregation, this fund including accumulated monies is to be held in trust and administered by the Valleyfield Cemetery for the upkeep of the cemetery. *[Approved by Hillcrest Session, November 17, 1991]*

To make a donation to this fund: -make cheques payable to Hillcrest United Church, mark envelope Darren Martin Memorial Fund and include your name and envelope number.

To request support from this fund: -make an inquiry of the Clerk of Session or the Minister.

11 - WIGGINTON ENDOWMENT

This endowment of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) is a gift from Muriel and the late Lorne Wigginton of Montague, in memory of their parents: Mr & Mrs T. J. Wigginton and Mr & Mrs Henry Burdett, dated September 19, 1994. A donation of \$100 was received in 1997 to bring the total to \$5100.

1. It is to be administered by the Committee of Stewards and Trustees (or its successor, in the event of committee structural changes) of Hillcrest United Church, Montague.
2. The principal is to remain untouched, being reinvested by said Committee with the institution of its choice.

3. The interest is to be used yearly wherever the said Committee feel it is most needed.
4. In the event of Hillcrest United Church ceasing to be a congregation, the principal is to go to the Community Park Cemetery, Montague.

13 - LES GRAVES SANTA FUND

This fund was set up in April 1992 by Leslie Graves of Montague, to provide Christmas treats for Sunday School Children of Hillcrest United Church. The beginning amount in the fund was \$1,500.

When fifty percent of the interest is more than what is needed for the Sunday school, then its use can be enlarged in the following order of priority

- a. to provide Christmas treats for all young people of Hillcrest
- b. to be used in other ways supportive of the activities of children in the congregation
- c. it is to be used to provide for special Christmas and other needs of Senior Citizens.

This fund is to be administered by the Session of Hillcrest United Church or its successor. If Hillcrest United Church ceases to be a United Church congregation; this fund is to remain with the continuing local congregation. If the congregation ceases to exist, the disposition of this fund and its monies shall be left to the decision of the Hillcrest Session or its successor. *(Approved by Session, May 24, 1992)*

14 – WOOD GUNDY SHARES – These shares were donated in memory of Mary Storey and are invested with Wood Gundy and administered by Hillcrest Stewards and Trustees.

Hillcrest Music Program - Annual Report for 2023

As we look back over 2023, we have much for which to be thankful! Our Advent and Christmas music was a joy to lead with 22 Senior Choir members and guests presenting our annual Christmas Cantata on December 10th. With readers, Les Warrington and Melva O'Connor-Rafuse, and accompanist, Sara White, we brought the story of Jesus' birth in song and word to an appreciative congregation.

White Gift worship on December 17th was led by our 12 voice Youth Choir with 6 special songs to celebrate Christmas. We were very happy to welcome Isabelle and Rachel to our youth choir. Bella Sibbick expertly adapted and directed our annual Nativity play which showed the talents and energy of over 15 young people. With touches of humour and much sincerity, these youth filled our hearts with their joy and passion!

On Christmas Eve, we were pleased to have 36 in our choir loft! Senior and Youth Choirs plus all 7 Sibbick Sibling Singers (Maddie, Emily, Hannah, Olivia, Bella, David and Hazel) shared their talents as we presented Christmas songs and familiar carols – with our special guest, Spencer, grandson of Laurie Annear who joins us each year for this special service! This year, our annual gift of "O Holy Night" sung by Andrea featured an arrangement with back up singing by our choir – a beautiful presentation!

On October 28th, we offered thanksgiving for the life of Liz Nimmo, our choir librarian and competent singer who, with her dear husband Jim (who passed away in 2018) were dedicated to our music program since moving to Montague in the summer of 1982. A large choir from Hillcrest and Joyful Sound raised their voices in love and remembrance as Timothy spoke eloquently about Liz's special qualities.

Summer music at Hillcrest featured singers aged 7 to over 80 sharing their music in solos and small groups each Sunday. We appreciate the special music of Angela Palmer and Charlie Hart; BellaRae, Farrah and Case Matheson; Matilda, Emmett and Robin Brothers; Ashlyn and Felix MacDonald; Willy VanSchuppen; Lynda Annear; Hannah Champion; Sara and Andrea White; Garth Steeves and Milton Ingalls; Ernie and Lynda Cox; Elizabeth and Timothy Wisnicki; and the Sibbick Singers who sang together as well as Bella, David and Hazel as soloists. We are thankful for these musicians who inspire us with their talent! We also thank our summer choir friends, Kent and Heather Shaw, and this year Garth and Milton who have been with us since May with Garth leading worship on a number of occasions and both adding their rich voices to our choir sound! What a joy that has been!

On July 10th, we presented our "FAMILY & FRIENDS" concert with many from Hillcrest plus other talented singers sharing favourite songs – what a treat to hear these "giving" musicians on this night! We appreciate the generous donations to Hillcrest general fund which supports our music program.

Adding their instrumental music during 2023 were Timothy on guitar and accordian, Elizabeth W. on Celtic harp, Mary MacLean on flute, and Timothy, Elizabeth, Sara and Milton on piano and organ. We are blessed to have these talented musicians!

Since spring of 2012, many of our youth have accepted the challenge to perform in the Kings County Music Festival with solos and duets and have taken advantage of the coaching I offer on a one-on-one basis. It was a joy to have a "live" festival in 2023 after several years of recorded submissions. Our Youth Choir were delightful as they sang as a group in person for the first time since 2019, with impressive remarks from our adjudicator and a recommendation to Provincials where they did themselves proud being awarded a special prize for Youth Choirs!

Back again this year was our FEAST of MUSIC concert on May 28th where Senior and Youth Choirs, Sibbick Siblings and a Joyful Sound Community Choir presented selections to a generous audience! This annual spring concert was held for over 30 years then had a "hiatus" the past 3 years due to covid.

On special Sundays: Easter (April 9th), Thanksgiving (October 8th), and our 52nd Anniversary (October 29th); our Senior and Youth Choirs combine to offer musical leadership with songs of peace and thoughtfulness plus anthems of joy and praise! We appreciate our giving singers who join us as our choir for celebrations of life, which is a wonderful support to the families involved.

During Lent on Wednesdays at noon, Timothy presented a short service in the Chapel where I played hymns on the piano (moved from the choir room).

We enjoyed youth concerts three times this year presented by Kings County Music Festival on Sunday afternoons in February, April and November. These recitals give youngsters who are taking music lessons, many from our church family, an opportunity to perform for an appreciative audience. We also hosted a Teachers' Recital on Sunday afternoon, March 12th where Timothy, Elizabeth, Sara and I plus other adults involved in music presented a concert in support of Music Festival. On March 31st, we were pleased to welcome Dr. Karem Simon, head of the Music Department at UPEI who presented "Clarinet Quintets by Mozart and Brahms" with the assistance of members of the Atlantic String Machine – an impressive concert of difficult music so well performed!

"A Joyful Sound Community Choir" under the direction of Christie Back, is back rehearsing at Hillcrest. They presented a beautiful Christmas concert on December 17th with donations of nearly \$900 given to our church in appreciation for the use of our sanctuary for their practices.

Five of our special guests for our Christmas Cantata have decided to join our Senior Choir. We are thrilled to welcome Donna Steele, Melissa Mullen, Rob MacLean, Clara VanderAa, and Joanie Livingstone! Our appreciation to all Senior Choir members who provide musical support every Sunday and at special services and concerts. Their commitment to Hillcrest music is a blessing!

As we sing our way into the new year, we offer thanks for the gifts of musical talent offered by so many in our church family.

As the hymnist Fred Pratt Green wrote in 1971 (VU 533)

*Let every instrument be tuned for praise! Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!
And may God give us faith to sing always – Hallelujah!*

Respectfully submitted by Anne White

Hillcrest U.C.W. Annual Report – 2023

As 2024 begins, we offer thanksgiving for the blessings that our United Church Women's group provides to our church family and the wider world with givings of time and talents, food and fellowship, money, and much more. UCW meets monthly from September to June and in addition to supporting each other, we volunteer for projects, share in worship and enjoy a program along with a light lunch. Last January, we welcomed Helen as our Chair and Anne will continue as co-chair. Melissa provided worship focusing on joy, vitality and fun plus the resilient strength of love and caring. Each member shared a Christmas story in response to our roll call. As our program, Elizabeth L shared part of the family story that she and Thane are writing for their family. She told us about her family's move to Canada from England on the liner, *Ivernia*, when she was a little girl. Mary served us a tasty lunch.

At our February meeting on Valentine's Day, Anne led worship with the message "share a little love, my friends". Roll call was answered with pleasant comments about the person whose name we had drawn last month. Business included plans for our "eat in" Spaghetti Supper on March 17th from 4 to 6:30. We also discussed the Covenanting service for

Timothy at 7 pm on March 26th at which we will help with lunch. Helen gave us details about our new Outreach Committee. We will be dedicating More Voices hymn books in memory of Sally Warrington, Margaret Campion and Flo Perry during worship. As we decorated Valentine cards for our church family, we enjoyed lunch provided by Melissa.

On March 14th, we continued planning for the Spaghetti Supper and Timothy's Covenanting Service which ended up being on April 2nd due to weather issues. Marjorie's worship centered on a prayer entitled "Just For Today". Roll call donations were food items for our supper. Elizabeth's program was a wonderful talk on "Saltwater Classics", a book of knitting patterns. We discussed the kitchen inspection and the upcoming Safety Course and enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by Sandra.

Our April 11th roll call was answered with donations of items for our kitchen. Anne led our worship on "Where do we experience God?" We discussed the successful Spaghetti Supper which raised over \$1100, the upcoming plant and bake sale on May 20th and the lobster supper in June. A lovely lunch was provided by Carol as we enjoyed Helen's slide show on their recent trip to Petra and Qatar.

On May 9th, we were led in worship by Helen focusing on food especially bread. Our roll call was answered with plants or baking plans in preparation for our Plant, Bake and Yard Sale to be held 9 to 12 noon on Saturday, May 20th. Plans were discussed for the Fiddler's Sons concert series to be held this summer on 13 Thursday evenings. Sandra provided a yummy lunch as we enjoyed Melissa's lovely slide show on their trip to mainland Greece and some of the islands.

Our June 6th meeting was held at Anne's cottage with a potluck lunch starting the activities. We welcomed Hilda Martin as a new member! Mary led us in worship about the relationship between the food we eat and the hospitality generated. Follow up discussions were held on recent fund raisers. We were pleased with the May 28th FEAST of MUSIC concert with over \$700 donated to Hillcrest. Our Plant, Bake and Yard Sale on May 20th took in over \$2200. Plans were discussed for the Lobster/Ham take out supper by Ways & Means on June 16th and the reception for Steve Clarkson's celebration of life in July.

After our summer break, UCW met on September 16th with Margie leading us in worship stressing the importance of faith. Roll call was answered with donations to Blooming House. In old business, the Lobster/Ham supper cleared over \$4000 and the prep parties were great for community building. The families were most appreciative of the funeral receptions for Steve Clarkson and William Campbell with thank you cards and donations received from Joan Clarkson and Beth Brehaut. Under new business, our Yard and Bake Sale has been postponed until Saturday morning, September 16th. Tentative plans were discussed for our annual take-out Turkey/Ham Supper on November 3rd. Elizabeth, Mary and Helen presented an interesting program on Roma at Three Rivers complete with their period costumes while we enjoyed lunch by Marjorie.

On October 10th, Anne led worship with the thought - "Putting on a happy demeanor helps us to have happier days." Rollcall was answered with kitchen supplies and follow up discussions were held on our Yard Sale which cleared over \$3000 and our Bake Sale which took in over \$1000 – a very successful event! We gave bursaries of \$50 to each of the 7 youth who attended Camp Abby. Turkey/Ham supper plans were made and we decided to have a surprise baby shower for the Wisnicki's at our next meeting.

Our November 14th meeting included presentations by Corinne Ellsworth on the "Arms of Jesus" ministries in Guatemala. Two houses were built by Corinne, Melva and other

volunteers – one is Hillcrest House # 2 and the other Margie donated in memory of Gary. Turkey/Ham supper follow up discussions took place with many comments of success and a few suggestions. Net proceeds of \$5000 were made by this large venture and we appreciate all the helpers who made it happen! We were happy to welcome Clara VanderAa as a new member of UCW! The Wisnickis provided us with lovely Celtic worship in word and on harp and Elizabeth W. was totally surprised that this “baby shower” was held in their honour with gifts of baby items and \$250 to buy things they need for the new one expected at the end of December.

Our December 12^h meeting began with worship by Sandra talking about receiving gifts. Members donated items for the CE Seniors’ gift bag project that Angela is spearheading for the second year. Discussion arose about the interdenominational youth group and the outreach committee providing occasional snacks. More talk evolved about a possible online auction in the spring. Some members of UCW helped with the Hicken wedding and many donated food and time for the celebration of life reception for Ethel Nicholson’s daughter-in-law on December 16th.

Sandra updates us each month about the Community Meals which are held on the 4th Thursday of the month. We appreciate Sandra and her faithful team for carrying on this project year-round!

Our UCW group cherishes the memory of members who have departed and offers thanksgiving for the many lives who have kept this important church group alive and well for many decades. We ask for God’s blessing as we begin our meetings for 2024 and keep our offerings of time, talent and treasure vibrant for those inside and outside our church doors and throughout the wider community.

Respectfully submitted by Anne White & Helen Lockerby

UCW Financial Report - 2023

In our account at CIBC on January 1st, 2023.....\$ 1,527.24

INCOME:

1. Monthly Donations by Members	\$ 2,405.00
2. Income from Catering	\$ 10,679.75
3. Donations from Congregation	\$ 474.05

TOTAL: \$ 13,558.80

EXPENSES:

1. Expenses from Catering	\$ 2,115.66
2. Bank Dues	\$ 8.50
3. Presbytery Dues	\$ 60.00
4. Donation to MRHS Grad. Fund	\$ 100.00
5. Donation to KCKMFA	\$ 50.00
6. Donation to Upper Room Angels	\$ 104.00
7. Donation to Mission and Service Fund	\$ 1,000.00
8. Donation to Southern K and Q Food Bank	\$ 300.00
9. Camp Abby Bursaries	\$ 350.00
10. Gift	\$ 250.00
11. Donation to AST	\$ 100.00

TOTAL: \$ 4,438.16

TO HILLCREST:

1. More Voices United	\$ 210.36
2. Donation to Garden Fund	\$ 100.00
3. Donations to Turkey Supper	\$ 975.00
4. Profits from Turkey Supper	\$ 3,992.00
5. UCW Contributions	\$ 2,567.00
6. Donation from UCW	\$ 2,300.00

TOTAL: \$ 10,144.36

GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES: \$ 14,582.52

INCOME _ EXPENSES = \$ 13,558.80 - \$ 14,582.52 = - \$ **1,023.72**

In our account on January 1st, 2024: \$ 1,527.24 - \$ 1,023.72 = \$ **503.52**

Media Team Annual Report 2023

The basic mandate of Hillcrest's Media Team (during 2023 Brenda Dewar, Melissa Mullen, Anne White, Mary Martin and Nancy VanWiechen) is to regularly publish news of the church's activities. We do this weekly on www.hillcrestunitedpei.com, on www.facebook.com/HillcrestUnitedChurchPEI and, when appropriate, in the local newspapers and on local radio. In addition, all accumulated materials (photos, videos and written items) are securely archived in the church's computer filing system to be accessible always as part of our church's history. If anyone wants/needs any of these, the church's administrator, Nancy VanWiechen, will share them with you.

In addition to the five members of our team, we wish to thank Sandra MacDonald and David White for contributing many photos over the past twelve months and Timothy Wisnicki and Nancy VanWiechen for sending the bulletins and sermons each week for inclusion on the website. Next year we intend to continue these services and also hope to teach the congregation a few tips for accessing information on the website. Also, during January 2024, we will be asking all Hillcrest groups to read all things relevant to their activities online and make suggestions for necessary updates which we can then insert to ensure our information continues to be accurate.

Submitted Dec 31, 2023 Brenda Dewar

Hillcrest Bridge Annual Report, 2023

In 2023 the Hillcrest Bridge Group met each Wednesday from 2-4 for a couple of hours of carefree fun. We serve hot drinks and sometimes one of the players brings a treat, which is appreciated by all. I say 'carefree fun' because more than one person has said that this is the time when they can forget whatever is weighing them down and focus on a game which none of us will ever master!

We appreciate Hillcrest providing this space each week and, with most putting \$4 or \$5 in the bottle, we sent \$3000 to Hillcrest in 2023. Each week we have three to four tables of players and welcome anyone who wants to join us, regardless of skill level.

Submitted by Sandra MacDonald

Knitting Group

The Knitting/Crochet/Crafts Group meets every Friday morning at 10 AM in the Schaffelberg Room during the fall, winter, and early spring months. There are sixteen members of the group, and most Friday mornings find twelve or more people meeting to work on a craft and enjoy some social time. Coffee and tea are provided and members take turns bringing treats.

Knitted items have been given to the Inclusions East shop for sale and taken to the Gift Shop at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Knitted baby hats are also made for the neonatal

unit at the QEH; hats, mittens, scarves and socks are made for the Southern Kings and Queens Food Bank every Christmas.

The dedicated crafters of the Friday morning group love to help out if someone is having trouble with a pattern, or if a person wants to learn a new craft. Kindness, encouragement, and help are available to all, and everyone is welcome!

Many thanks to the group members, who contributed to a new chair for the Schaffelberg Room during the year.

Respectfully submitted by Sandra MacDonald and Elizabeth LeLacheur

Hillcrest Book Club 2023

Hillcrest Book Club meets in the chapel monthly from September through June at 10 am usually on the third Wednesday. We consistently have ten or so members at our meetings. We discuss books from a variety of genres and the discussions are always lively and accompanied by snacks and beverages.

Our members include people from Hillcrest congregation and a few from outside our church community.

In January we presented what each of us had been reading over the holiday season. In February we read a lovely little novel 'The Little Paris Book Shop' by Nina George which took us on a scenic tour of the French countryside. In March we enjoyed 'A Man Called Ove' by Swedish writer Fredrik Backman. Our April read was 'From Sword to Pen' a biography written by our own member Kathleen MacMillan which explored the life of her relative the Honourable Cyrus J MacMillan, PEI author, academic, and national politician. Our May choice was 'And My Name Is-Stories from the Quilt' by local author, singer, and song writer Margie Carmichael who joined us for an enjoyable romp through poetry and short stories set primarily on PEI. In June we met at Anne White's cottage and led by Judy Gaudet, one of our members, we played a poetry game and exchanged books from our own collections for summer reading. Our September gathering, led by Brenda Dewar, featured a selection of books for youth written by Canadian Eric Walters. In October, Hugh and Sandra MacDonald took us on a journey through 'Braiding Sweetgrass' by Robin Kimerer, a wonderful nonfiction centering on gift and gratitude economy and reciprocity with our environment. Our November meet featured a novel entitled 'Anxious People' by Fredrik Backman whose complicated plot was challenging and intriguing. We finished out our year with 'The Power of Story' by Canadian author, lawyer and member of Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Harold Johnson, who explains the role of storytelling in every aspect of human life.

Many thanks to Brenda Dewar for accessing many of our reads this year. We welcome others to our lively group. Please consider joining us in 2024 for fun and fellowship and great literary experiences.

Anne White and Mary Martin, Coordinators

Sturgeon United Church Annual Report – 2023

We had a great year at Sturgeon United, with good weekly attendance and participation by the congregation.

We are very grateful for Timothy's leadership and Elizabeth's musical support, and we appreciate having the opportunity to be part of their journey in Ministry.

During the year, we welcomed guest speakers, including Julie Pellissier-Lush, GEBIS Nuns, Garth and Milton, Rev. Jim Harbel, and Corinne Ellsworth and Melva Rafuse. Several evening services were held, including an evening of music with Central Queens Musical Friends, an evening hymn sing lead by Garth and Milton, and our Anniversary Service. There were also several congregational potlucks, where we enjoyed good food and fellowship.

Other activities included: money was raised to purchase a heat pump, a bus trip to Summerside, Wednesday afternoon crafts, donations to the food bank, and the Christmas Memorial tree.

We look forward to another great year in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Deborah Lavers & Sandra Stephens

Sturgeon United Church Financial Report

GENERAL FUND

REVENUE

Envelopes and Donations	15,840.00
M & S	861.00
Plate	88.00
Rebate from Hillcrest	<u>5,881.31</u>
TOTAL	22,670.31

EXPENSES

Montague Pastoral Charge	8,098.20
M & S	861.00
Oil	1,941.00
Snow Removal	358.80
Insurance	656.00
Anniversary Service	250.00
Hillcrest's Young People's Outreach	100.00
Electricity	436.31
Donations	100.00
Honorarium	<u>1,200.00</u>
TOTAL	14,000.51

December 31, 2022	4383.86
December 31, 2023	8669.80

Submitted by Deborah Lavers and Sandra Stephens

BUILDING FUND

Balance	December 31, 2022	4383.86
Donations 2023		<u>3236.50</u>
		7620.36
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Heat Pump		<u>5175.00</u>
	Balance December 2023	2445.36

Submitted by Deborah Lavers and Sandra Stephens

Sturgeon United Church Ladies' Aid - Annual Report - 2023

In Bank December 31, 2022		\$4,828.89
<u>Income</u>		
Auction	3,349.00	
Dues	17.00	
Penny Auction	6.20	<u>\$3,372.20</u>
<u>Expenses</u>		
Church	2048.00	
Wreath	29.00	
Pot Luck	17.00	
Gifts	300.00	
Graduations	60.00	
Trip	40.00	
Flowers	74.50	
Plants	20.00	
Food Bank	100.00	
Fruit Baskets	172.44	
Turkey	34.00	\$2894.94
	In Bank December 31, 2023	\$5,306.15

Nominating Committee Report 2023

The Nominating committee, consisting of Joanie Livingston, Nancy VanWiechen and Clara VanderAa. We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to all those who so willingly agreed to commit to a second term and to those individuals who offered and re-offered to serve on committees where needed. **The following is a list of individuals we nominate to serve in the following committees for Hillcrest United Church:**

Congregational Meeting:

Chair - Danny MacKinnon

Secretary - Susan Watts

Stewards & Trustees:

Milton Ingalls for a three year term

David White for a 2nd three year term

Margie Tesselaar for a 2nd three year term

Nominating Committee:

Clara VanderAa – three year term

Ministry & Personnel

Garth Steeves - three year term

For general information, a complete list of committees and membership for the upcoming year is included.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy VanWiechen, Chair

Hillcrest United Church 2024

Congregational Meeting

Chair: Danny MacKinnon (pending nomination acceptance)

Secretary: Susan Watts (pending nomination acceptance)

Stewards & Trustees

John LeLacheur	2026	1 st Term
Scott Annear	2026	1 st Term
Milton Ingalls	2027	1st Term (pending nomination acceptance)
David White	2027	2nd Term
Margie Tesselaar	2027	2nd Term
Clara VanderAa	2025	2 nd Term
Edgar Dewar	2025	2 nd Term
Melissa Mullen	2025	1 st Term
Thane LeLacheur	2026	1 st Term

Nominating Committee

Joan Livingstone 2026 1st Term
Nancy VanWiechen 2025 1st Term
Clara VanderAa 2027 1st Term

Safety Team Coordinator

Sherren MacKinnon

Sunday Counters

January Ellen & Kathleen MacNearney
February Beryl & Angela Palmer
March Kathy Crane & Nancy VanWiechen
April Melvina Buchanan and Nancy VanWiechen
May Joan Livingstone & Lorna Bulpitt
June Carol Blum & Shirley Johnson
July Melva O'Connor-Rafuse & Margie Tesselaar
August Elmer VanderAa & Clara VanderAa
September Elizabeth LeLacheur & Susan Watts
October Janet Harper & Helen Lockerby
November Shirley Johnston & Mary Matheson
December Elizabeth Boehner & Clara VanderAa

Hillcrest Session

Chair: (Co-Chairs) Margaret Tesselaar (2023) & Elizabeth LeLacheur (2024)

Members

Elizabeth LeLacheur 2027
Shirley Johnston 2027
Melvina Buchanan 2027
Sara White 2027
Beryl Palmer 2027
Hugh MacDonald 2027
Angela Palmer 2025
Melissa Mullen 2026
Margie Tesselaar 2026
Hilda Martin 2026
Ritchie Matheson 2026
Marjory Tattrie 2026
Carol Hicken 2026
Sandra Hicken 2025
Wendy Watts 2025
Dannie MacKinnon 2025
Bella Sibbick 2025
Thane LeLacheur 2025

Montague Pastoral Charge 2024

Executive Committee

Chair Helen Lockerby
Secretary Nancy VanWiechen

Ministry & Personnel

Carol Blum	2026	1 st Term
Garth Steeves	2027	1 st Term
Debra Lavers	2025	1 st Term
Beryl Palmer	2026	1 st Term

Manse

Charlotte Conrad	2024	(Sturgeon)
Sandra MacDonald	2024	(UCW)
David White	2024	(Hillcrest) 1 st Term
	2024	(Stewards & Trustees)

Christian Education

Remaining vacant for now (Sturgeon)
Bella Sibbick (Sunday School Coordinator)
Angela Palmer 2024 (Session)
Mary Martin 2025 2nd Term

Representative to FSLDW Regional Council

Debra Lavers	2027	2 nd Term
Shirley Johnston	2024	1 st Term
Corrine Ellsworth	2024	1 st Term

Representative to the Church Extension Corporation

Hughie MacDonald 2025